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ABSTRACT

Believing that school boards must continuously assess their own performances in order to act effectively, the National School Boards Association and the American Association of School Administrators produced this brief guide to self-evaluation for school boards. The authors recommend adoption of a written policy on goal setting and self-evaluation, and set forth the basic criteria for an effective program. A sample self-evaluation instrument is provided as a model to indicate the kinds of questions that are important to ask as well as aspects of school administration that ought to be addressed. (PGD)

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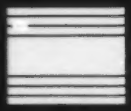

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A Joint Publication
of the American Association of School Administrators
and the National School Boards Association

EA 013 732

GOAL SETTING AND SELF EVALUATION

OF SCHOOL BOARDS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction ____ 1

Goal Setting and Self Evaluation ____ 3

Evaluating School Board Operational Procedures ____ 3

Sample Self Evaluation Instrument ____ 6

Instructional Program ____ 6

Students ____ 7

Board's Basic Commitments ____ 8

Board Operations ____ 8

Relationship With Superintendent ____ 10

Fiscal Management ____ 11

Noninstructional Services ____ 11

Facilities ____ 12

Personnel ____ 12

Employer-Employee Relations ____ 14

School Community Relations ____ 14

Acknowledgments ____ 16

INTRODUCTION

School boards expect a high level of performance from those who are employed to run the schools. Communities also expect a high level of performance from those who are elected or appointed to govern the schools.

There are many reasons for a sound evaluation program. An effective, constructive evaluation system provides criteria against which performance will be measured. It can point out areas of accomplishment and areas where improvement is needed. Ultimately, a well-conceived, well-managed evaluation program can lead to a better education for the children and adults . . . all learners . . . in the schools.

To be truly effective, evaluation must start at the top. It must touch every level . . . every part of the system. Otherwise, someone will rightfully ask, "Who evaluates the evaluator?" And the question deserves an answer.

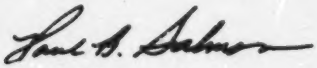
Ultimately, the performance of a board member is measured at election or appointment time. But that is not enough. It is up to the board to establish those criteria which can be used to identify its own quality performance. Then, on a regular basis, the board should meet to compare individual assessments of how well the governing body is functioning.

While the superintendent should be requested to provide suggestions for the board on how it might work more effectively, a board must ultimately organize a system for evaluating its own performance. ***Goal Setting and Self Evaluation of School Boards*** provides a framework for the development of a self evaluation instrument. While an instrument must fit the specific needs of each board, basic criteria are included for consideration.

The manuscript for this publication was developed cooperatively by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). Content has been reviewed and

recommended by the Joint AASA-NSBA Committee and approved by the NSBA Board of Directors and the AASA Executive Committee.

It is our hope that ***Goal Setting and Self Evaluation of School Boards*** will ultimately lead to even more effective lay governance of our public schools.



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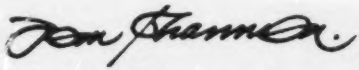

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Executive Director
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GOAL SETTING AND SELF EVALUATION

A Joint Position Statement developed by the National School Boards Association and the American Association of School Administrators and recommended by The Joint AASA-NSBA Committee.

How well does our board do its job? Do we function as effectively as possible? How can we individually work to improve our overall performance? And how are we going to assess our progress toward improving performance? These questions should appear on every school board's agenda under "continuous business." They belong there, because a vital part of a governing board's obligation to make policy includes: identifying goals, monitoring progress toward those goals, and after each assessment of progress making needed revisions in the goals.

To meet this obligation, every school board should adopt a written policy that states the board's belief that goal setting and evaluation are essential to exemplary school leadership. The policy also should spell out what kind of goal setting and evaluation activities the board believes will improve its own stewardship.

Here is an example of such a policy statement:

EVALUATING SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The board believes that periodic, formal and informal evaluations of its operational procedures will improve the board's performance, exemplify the kind of constructive evaluations the board encourages for all school personnel and programs, and promote a spirit of team work throughout the district. Formal evaluations also provide the board with suggestions useful to the board in establishing objectives it will strive to accomplish.

At least once each year, board members will evaluate their own performance . . . and that of the board as a whole . . . according to standards

similar to those illustrated in the self evaluation instrument which is included in this publication.*

All of this information will be used by the board each year when it establishes objectives it will strive to accomplish during the coming year. How well the board accomplishes its objectives will be a measure of its performance in any year.

The basic features of a board evaluation/goal setting program are:

1. ***Any evaluation should be constructive.*** That is, it should be a tool that assumes a group of individuals is capable of improvement if evaluation is carried out systematically with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results.

2. ***Board members should develop the standards against which they will evaluate themselves.*** They should be involved in development of standards that measure, for instance, their relationship with the superintendent, how well they conduct board meetings, how the community perceives the schools, and so on.

3. ***A board should recognize the difference between school district goals and goals that the board sets for its own performance.*** Some significant areas for developing school board goals are encompassed within three of the main functions of school board members, which are to serve as:

   - governors of the school district as part of local representative government;
   - ambassadors of the instructional program to explain the nature of the learning program to the people of the district; and,
   - advocates for the learners of the school district with the public generally and in the halls of other local governmental agencies and the state and federal governments.

4. ***A form for the evaluation/goal-setting program should be designed and it should contain places to indicate not only strengths and weaknesses, but also to write in suggestions***

**The self evaluation instrument included in this publication is intended to serve only as a sample. Unique situations may exist in the local district that require different treatment. The individual board should tailor its evaluation instrument to those conditions. In addition, school boards and superintendents would be well advised to turn to their state associations of school boards and school administrators for advice and counsel. Those state associations can provide rich experience and the perspective of individual state law to enhance the effort.*

about how to improve. These suggestions can be used to set objectives for board improvement over the coming year.

5. ***The board should not limit itself to those items that appear on the evaluation form.*** While formal evaluation forms encourage discussions, informal comments also have value. Each judgment should be documented with as much supportive evidence as possible.
6. ***Formal evaluation should take place at least once a year and at a scheduled time and place.*** A specific time should be scheduled well in advance of the formal evaluation.
7. ***A composite picture of board strengths and weaknesses is most accurate.*** Therefore, each board member should complete an evaluation form independently of other board members. Then the board as a whole should meet to compare and discuss results.
8. ***When results have been discussed and tablulated, the board should list the objectives it will attempt to accomplish before its next evaluation session.***
9. ***The board should devise a process for establishing goals.***
10. ***The board should be evaluated as whole, not as individuals.***
11. ***The board should provide itself with appropriate inservice education to ensure it meets its own objectives.***
12. ***The board should adhere to mandates of open meeting "sunshine laws" to ensure that self-evaluation of a board conducted in executive session does not violate any law or policy.***

SAMPLE SELF EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

ASSESSMENT OF BOARD OPERATIONS

This checklist of assessment items is not intended to be all-inclusive or universally applicable. Changes in the listing are appropriate where local circumstances appear to warrant additions or deletions.

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM			
Understands the basic instructional program mandated by the legislature and the state board of education.	_____	_____	_____
Approves course additions or deletions to the curriculum.	_____	_____	_____
Directs the development of the general instructional program for student body as a whole according to unique needs of community and approves it in accord with law.	_____	_____	_____
Annually reviews the basic instructional program and special programs for exceptional children to ensure that the district is, within its resources, providing the best education it can to meet student's individual needs.	_____	_____	_____

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM			
Balances the overall needs of the students and community with the efforts of special interest groups to influence the instructional program or the development or distribution of instructional materials.	_____	_____	_____
Has a process for channeling complaints of special interest groups.	_____	_____	_____
Encourages suggestions for improvement of the curriculum from staff, students, and the community.	_____	_____	_____
Establishes a process for approving textbooks and library material that relies on professional staff judgment, but includes suggestions from students and community.	_____	_____	_____
Provides for promotion and graduation of students based on established state and district standards.	_____	_____	_____
STUDENTS			
Provides equal access to curriculum and cocurricular activities to all students regardless of sex, national and ethnic origin, race, and religion.	_____	_____	_____
Provides alternative programs for students as well as process for transfer and enrolling.	_____	_____	_____

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
STUDENTS			
Safeguards the privacy of student records.	_____	_____	_____
Provides students with a procedure for settling complaints.	_____	_____	_____
Safeguards student due process rights in assignment to classes, suspension and expulsion proceedings, and police interrogations and searches.	_____	_____	_____
Encourages a positive rather than negative approach to student discipline.	_____	_____	_____
Adopts policy to assure a health program for students.	_____	_____	_____
BOARD'S BASIC COMMITMENTS			
Has statement on the district's educational philosophy and instructional goals.	_____	_____	_____
Has a set of written board policies and has an established process for updating such policies to guide the administration of the District.	_____	_____	_____
Is committed to periodic evaluations of district programs and staff.	_____	_____	_____
Regularly reports to the public on how well district programs are meeting instructional and other goals.	_____	_____	_____

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
BOARD OPERATIONS			
Endeavors to make the decision-making process work effectively by ensuring productive use of meeting time.	_____	_____	_____
Encourages board members to cultivate a personal sense of responsibility for contributing to the establishment of a climate at board meetings conducive to reasonable deliberations and sound decision making.	_____	_____	_____
RELATIONSHIP WITH SUPERINTENDENT			
Delegates authority to superintendent to permit execution of his/her responsibilities.	_____	_____	_____
Develops with superintendent an up-to-date job description and statement of performance expectations against which the superintendent's performance is evaluated regularly.	_____	_____	_____
Compensates the superintendent at a salary commensurate with his/her background, skills, and responsibilities.	_____	_____	_____
Encourages the superintendent to participate in professional development opportunities.	_____	_____	_____
Invites frequent formal and informal communications from the superintendent.	_____	_____	_____

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
PERSONNEL			
Has policy for staff recruitment, placement, and retention that balances the board's responsibility to maintain a high quality educational program with staff rights such as seniority, tenure and other incidents of employment set forth in law or board policy.	_____	_____	_____
EMPLOYER/EMPLOYEE RELATIONS			
Provides for negotiations (or meeting and conferring, if applicable) in good faith with employee representatives where such relationships are consistent with state law and board policy.	_____	_____	_____
Preserves and maintains the rights of the public to govern the school through their representatives in all employer/employee relations by enhancing so-called "management rights."	_____	_____	_____
Has clearly established policy governing employer/employee relations.	_____	_____	_____
Has plans to keep schools open in the event of a staff job action.	_____	_____	_____
SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS			
Sponsors an effective, organized, continuous internal and external communications program.	_____	_____	_____

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS			
Assures that information is available to the news media. Openness and honesty are hallmarks	_____	_____	_____
Assures that information about board decisions is disseminated both internally and externally.	_____	_____	_____
Actively seeks input from community and staff in establishing goals and objectives	_____	_____	_____
Respects the public's right to know by providing information about school programs and access to public documents held by the district	_____	_____	_____
Encourages public attendance at board meetings	_____	_____	_____
Has a policy for public use of school facilities	_____	_____	_____
Encourages community involvement in school decisions and programs	_____	_____	_____
Provides for an appropriate study of staff and community attitudes on a regular basis	_____	_____	_____
Channels public compaints about policies, curriculum, instructional materials or personnel to the superintendent for resolution according to established policy	_____	_____	_____
Provides leadership in securing maximum community support for good educational programs	_____	_____	_____

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NSBA: Loretta Manwaring, C. R. (Bob) Marshall, Rayma C. Page, Thomas A. Shannon, Mack J. Spears, Jean S. Tufts

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Goals Setting and Self Evaluation of School Boards was reviewed and approved by the NSBA Board of Directors and the AASA Executive Committee.

Staff members from both the National School Boards Association and the American Association of School Administrators were also involved in the development of this publication. NSBA Executive Director, Thomas A. Shannon and AASA Executive Director, Paul Salmon, worked directly with the Joint Committee. Final editing and production were under the direction of AASA Associate Executive Director, Gary Marx.

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
BOARD OPERATIONS			
Has clearly written policies for conducting meetings, including agenda preparation and promulgation and a process for hearing public comments.	_____	_____	_____
Conducts meetings in rooms which can accommodate public attendance.	_____	_____	_____
Selects officers on the basis of ability.	_____	_____	_____
Introduces items for the board agenda according to the board's established policy, rather than introducing such items hastily at a meeting for which the agenda already has been set.	_____	_____	_____
Provides the superintendent the opportunity to recommend action prior to taking action.	_____	_____	_____
Makes only constructive criticism of staff recommendations.	_____	_____	_____
Takes action of holding over matters for further study only when issues are complex or controversial or where insufficient information is perceived to be needed.	_____	_____	_____
Encourages board members to improve leadership capacities through participation in services, publications, and meetings sponsored by school boards associations and other educational groups.	_____	_____	_____

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
RELATIONSHIP WITH SUPERINTENDENT			
Engenders a climate of trust and mutual respect between the board and the superintendent.	_____	_____	_____
Consults the superintendent immediately on any issue which, if left undiscussed, might alienate board members or the superintendent.	_____	_____	_____
Encourages use of the superintendent's time for planning.	_____	_____	_____
Encourages the superintendent to build an administrative team.	_____	_____	_____
FISCAL MANAGEMENT			
Approves an annual budget that balances not only dollars, but also the quality of education the district wants to offer with the ability of the community to support the school program.	_____	_____	_____
Encourages the seeking of public and private funds for which the district is eligible.	_____	_____	_____
Adopts policies which ensure sound management and fiscal control.	_____	_____	_____
NONINSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES			
Adopts policy to provide a safety program in case of accidents or emergencies.	_____	_____	_____

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
NONINSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES			
Requires buildings and grounds staff to carry out a program of school security that limits vandalism and a maintenance program that protects the district's capital investments.	_____	_____	_____
Provides sufficient basic instructional and noninstructional equipment and supplies to conduct the instructional program.	_____	_____	_____
Provides a student transportation system in accordance with state law and district policy.	_____	_____	_____
Provides cost-effective and nutritious school food service consistent with board policy.	_____	_____	_____
Ensures appropriate collection and retention of district records.	_____	_____	_____
FACILITIES			
Yearly implements and updates a master plan for school facilities according to changes in the instructional program, enrollment demands, and community needs.	_____	_____	_____
Ensures that appropriate insurance protection for district property is provided.	_____	_____	_____
Adopts energy conservation policy to ensure best use of available fuel and education of staff on energy conservation.	_____	_____	_____

	Adequate	*Inadequate*	*How To Improve*
PERSONNEL			
Approves job descriptions for all approved positions.	_____	_____	_____
Has personnel policies which ensure employee rights, encourage them to participate in school decisions, protect them against abuse to the extent possible and encourage them to participate in community affairs.	_____	_____	_____
Yearly adopts a compensation plan which draws or retains a high quality staff and encourages the staff to participate in professional growth activities.	_____	_____	_____
Adopts policy ensuring sound evaluation of all district employees.	_____	_____	_____
Encourages professional growth through:			
Visitations at other schools or professional conferences consistent with board policy.	_____	_____	_____
Provides staff development program that addresses identified deficiencies.	_____	_____	_____
Leaves of absence for extended course work.	_____	_____	_____
District-sponsored inservice training.	_____	_____	_____
Provides appropriate insurance protection for district personnel in the performance of duties as employees.	_____	_____	_____